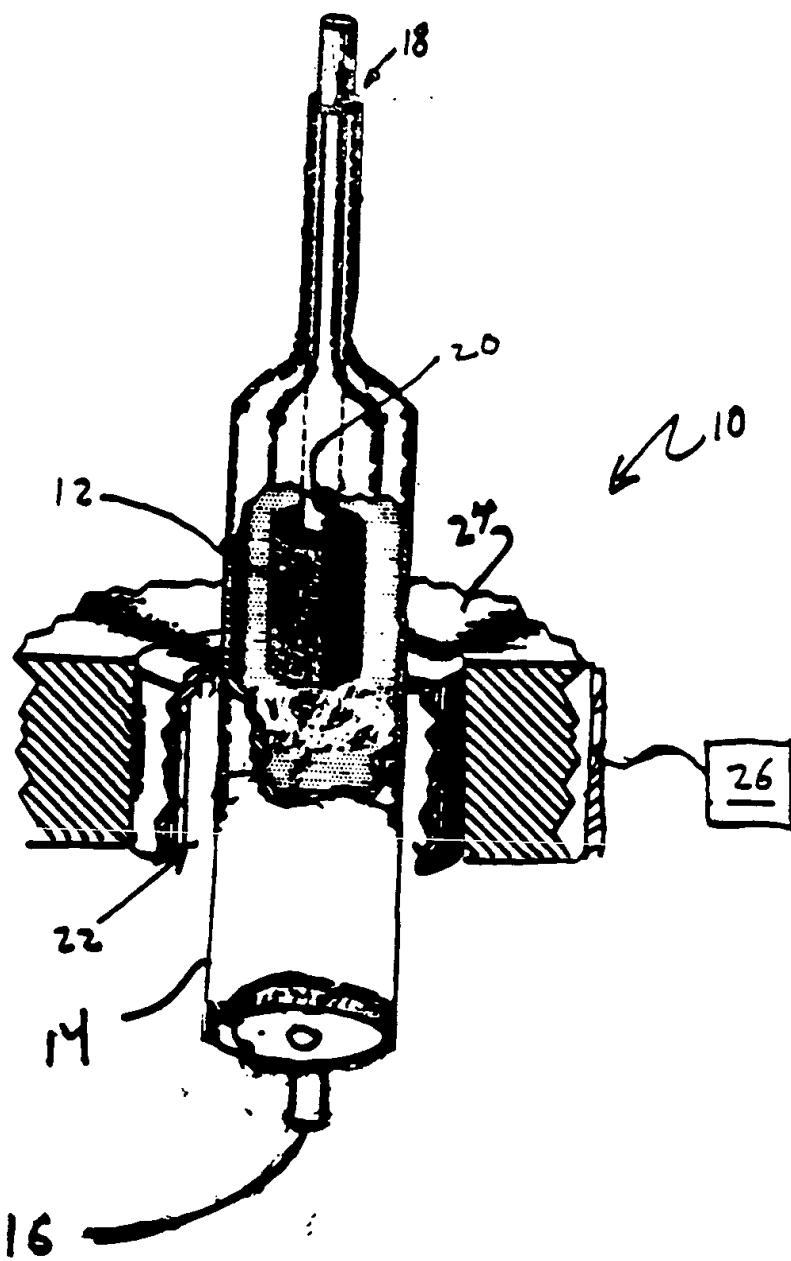


FIG. 1



Pass a gel body through a hot zone to partially sinter the gel body

FIG. 2

32

Repass the gel body through the hot zone to further sinter the gel body

30

34

Subject an end portion of a gel body to a hot zone to partially sinter the end portion

FIG. 4

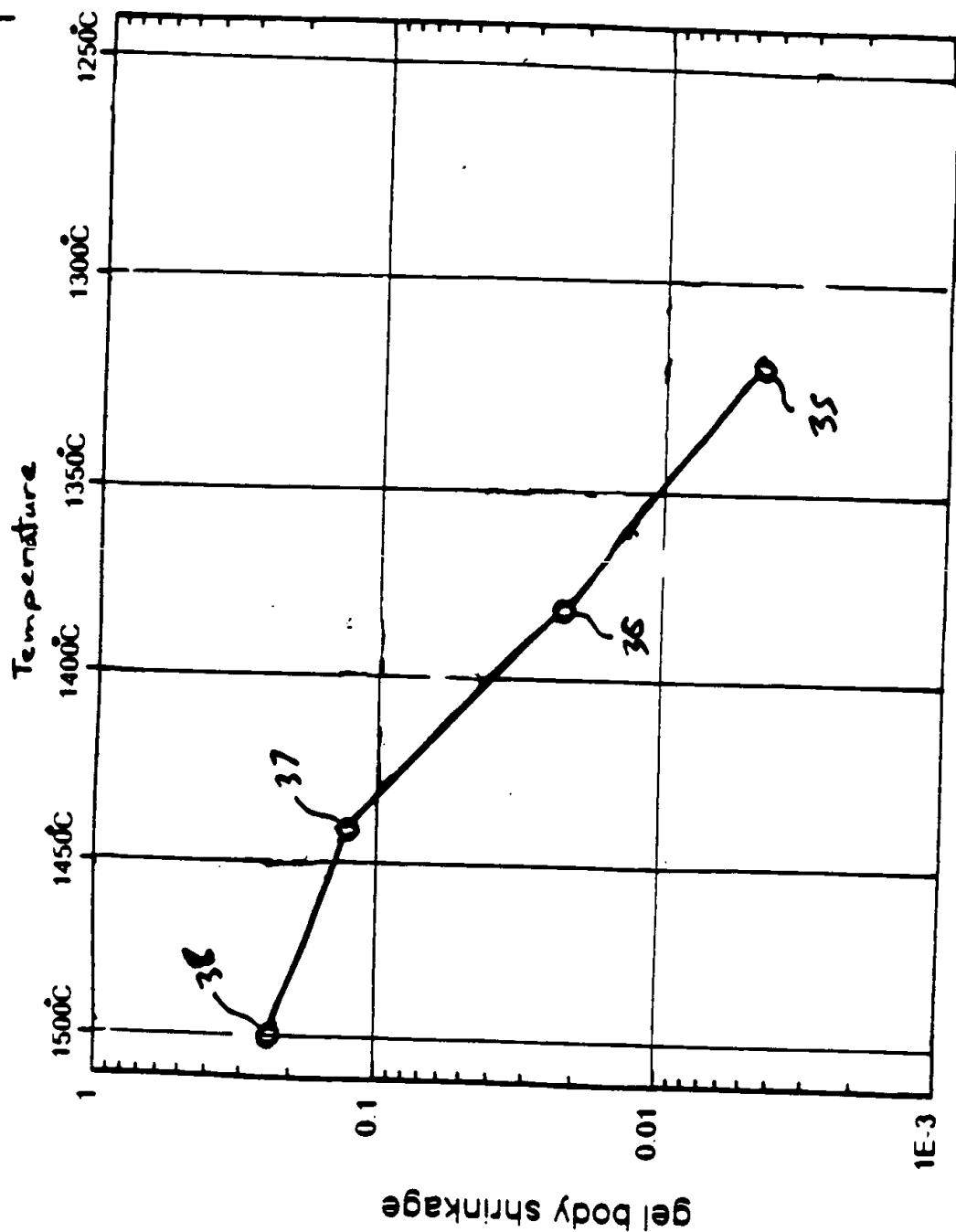
42

Pass the gel body through the hot zone to fully sinter the gel body, the act of passing causes the previously sintered portion to traverse through the hot zone last

40

44

F/6. 3



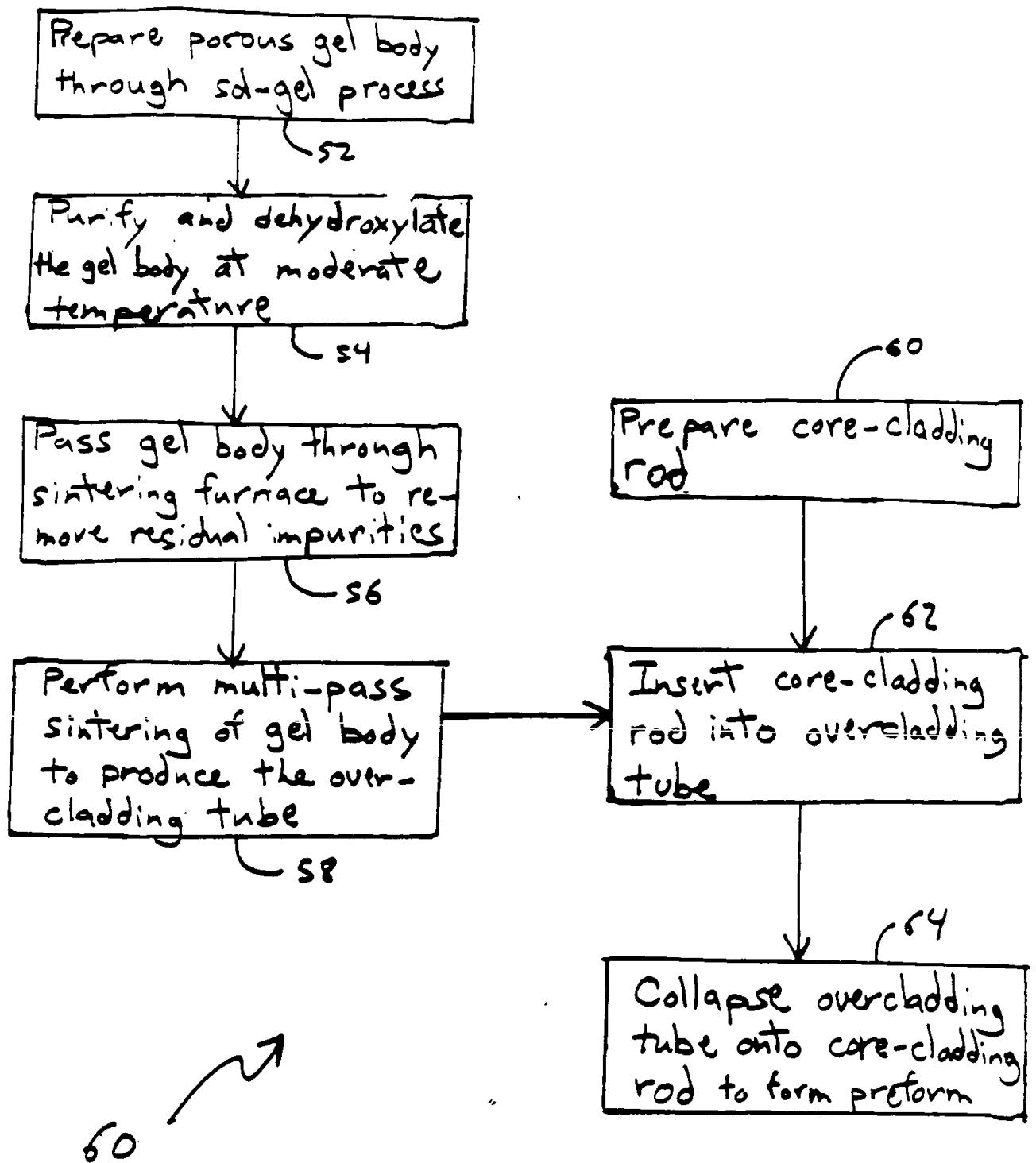


FIG. 5